

**CLAIMS**

1. In a data processing system with a distributed architecture (100) including a plurality of processing entities (120s, 120g, 120e), each entity playing at least one of a plurality of predetermined roles in the system, a method (300) of configuring the entities including the steps of:  
defining (306-327) a target configuration for each role,  
identifying (330-336) the at least one role of each entity,  
and  
10 configuring (333, 339-366) each entity according to the target configuration corresponding to the at least one role of the entity.
2. The method (300) according to claim 1, wherein the plurality of roles includes at least one physic role defined by an  
15 architecture of the system (100).
3. The method (300) according to claim 2, wherein an indication of the physic role of each entity is stored in a memory structure at an installation of the entity in the system (100), the step of identifying (330-336) the at least one role of each entity  
20 including retrieving (330) the indication of the corresponding physic role from the memory structure.
4. The method (300) according to any claim from 1 to 3, wherein the plurality of roles includes at least one logic role defined by a software application installed in the system (100).
- 25 5. The method (300) according to claim 4, wherein the software application includes a plurality of software features, each logic role being associated with a corresponding software feature, and

wherein the step of identifying (330-336) the at least one role of each entity includes:

detecting (333) the software feature installed on the entity, and

5 establishing (336) the logic role according to the installed software feature.

6. The method (300) according to any claim from 1 to 5, wherein the step of configuring (333,339-366) each entity according to the target configuration includes:

10 detecting (333) a current configuration of the entity,  
identifying (345) at least one action required to reach the target configuration from the current configuration, and  
executing (348-366) the at least one action.

7. The method (300) according to claim 6, further including the  
15 steps of:

providing (306) a software product including a plurality of components,

associating (309) a reference structure with the product,  
the reference structure defining the target configuration for  
20 each role specifying at least one component to be installed, and  
associating (312) a transition structure with the product,  
for each current configuration the transition structure  
identifying the at least one action required to reach each target configuration.

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8. A computer program application (220,245,255,265) directly loadable into a working memory of a data processing system with a distributed architecture (100) for performing the method (300) of any claim from 1 to 7 when the program application is run in the  
30 system.

9. In a data processing system with a distributed architecture (100) including a plurality of processing entities (120s,120g,120e), each entity playing at least one of a plurality of predetermined roles in the system, a computer program application (220,245,255,265) directly loadable into a working memory of a server computer for performing a method (300) of configuring the entities when the program application is run on the server computer, the method including the steps of:
- defining (306-327) a target configuration for each role,
  - 10 identifying (330-336) the at least one role of each entity, and
  - causing (333,339-366) each entity to be configured according to the target configuration corresponding to the at least one role of the entity.
- 15 10. A program product (180) comprising a computer readable medium on which the program application (220,245,255,265) of claim 8 or 9 is stored.
11. A data processing system with a distributed architecture (100) including a plurality of processing entities
- 20 (120s,120g,120e), each entity playing at least one of a plurality of predetermined roles in the system, means (230,240) for defining a target configuration for each role, means (220) for identifying the at least one role of each entity, and means (245,255,265) for configuring each entity according to the target
- 25 configuration corresponding to the at least one role of the entity.
12. In a data processing system with a distributed architecture (100) including a plurality of processing entities (120s,120g,120e), each entity playing at least one of a plurality
- 30 of predetermined roles in the system, a server computer for

configuring the entities including means (230,240) for defining a target configuration for each role, means (220) for identifying the at least one role of each entity, and means (245,255,265) for causing each entity to be configured according to the target  
5 configuration corresponding to the at least one role of the entity.